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Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ARA-06 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 INRE-00 USIE-00

CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05

PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 OMB-01 SAJ-01 EB-07 TRSE-00

COME-00 FRB-03 CIEP-01 SAM-01 IO-10 /082 W
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TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 0642
AMEMBASSY LISBON IMMEDIATE
INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY ROME IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY MADRID
AMCONSUL NICE
AMCONSUL BORDEAUX
AMCONSUL MARSEILLE
AMCONSUL MARTINIQUE
AMCONSUL LYON
AMCONSUL STRASBOURG

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINT, PFOR, PGOV, FR
SUBJECT: FRENCH DAILY PUBLISHES SPECIAL EDITION OF THE REPUBLICA

REF: PARIS 16162

SUMMARY. ON JUNE 23, THE MILDLY SOCIALIST QUOTIDIEN DE PARIS (QP) PUBLISHED A FOUR-PAGE SPECIAL EDITION OF THE REPUBLICA, WHOSE EDITORS USED THE OCCASION TO MAKE THEIR CASE BEFORE THE FRENCH PUBLIC (WITH THE EXCEPTION OF ONE EDITORIAL, ALL THE ITEMS HAD BEEN TRANSLATED). THE REPUBLICA/QP TAKES ISSUE WITH THE PORTUGUESE COMMUNIST
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PARTY'S (PCP) DISSATISFACTION WITH THE RESULTS OF THE

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PORTUGUESE ELECTIONS, ACCUSES THE PCP OF HAVING ACCEPTED MOSCOW DICTATES IN FORMULATING ITS CURRENT TACTICS, AND GIVES A DETAILED HISTORY OF THE REPUBLICA AFFAIR. END SUMMARY.

1. THE DECISION TO PUBLISH: THE QP DID NOT SEEK WIDE POLITICAL SUPPORT FOR ITS DECISION TO PUBLISH THE REPUBLICA'S SPECIAL EDITION. SOCIALIST PARTY (PS) FIRST SECRETARY FRANCOIS MITTERRAND WAS ONLY INFORMED OF THE QP'S DECISION ON JUNE 19, THREE DAYS AFTER QP AND REPUBLICA EDITORS HAD AGREED ON A PUBLICATION DATE. VARIOUS MEMBERS OF THE PS LINKED WITH MITTERRAND'S SUPPORT FOR THE REPUBLICA WERE KEPT UNINFORMED UNTIL THE QP'S PRESSES HAD ACTUALLY BEGUN TO ROLL ON SUNDAY, JUNE 22.

2. FIRST REACTIONS: PCF DAILY L'HUMANITE HAD CLEARLY NOT SEEN THE QP/REPUBLICA WHEN IT PUT TOGETHER ITS SURPRISINGLY MILD FRONT-PAGE EDITORIAL ON THE MATTER. AFTER STRESSING THAT THE RECENT GUARANTEES GIVEN BY THE ARMED FORCES MOVEMENT (AFM) AGAINST ANY FORCIBLE INSTALLATION OF SOCIALISM IN PORTUGAL SHOULD SUFFICE TO EVEN THE MOST BIASED OBSERVER, L'HUMANITE EXPRESSED DOUBTS ABOUT "A CAMPAIGN WHICH RESEMBLES MORE A POLITICAL OPERATION AGAINST THE MFA AND THE COMMUNISTS THAN A GENEROUS COMBAT -- EVEN THOUGH LATE -- FOR FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION." L'HUMANITE EDITORIALIST RENE ANDRIEU TOOK A CURIOUS LINE IN DENYING THE QP/REPUBLICA'S ASSERTION (SEE BELOW) THAT PCP TACTICS HAD BEEN FIXED IN MOSCOW: AFTER REMINDING HIS READERS THAT THE FORCES SUPPORTING THE REPUBLICA ARE AIMING THEIR FIRE AT SOMETHING CONSIDERABLY GREATER THAN A CONFLICT BETWEEN THE REPUBLICA'S EDITORS AND ITS PRINTERS, ANDRIEU WENT ON TO DENY THAT EUROPE'S COMMUNIST PARTIES RECEIVE THEIR POLITICAL LINE FROM MOSCOW. HOWEVER, "THE FRENCH COMMUNISTS . . HOLD TOO JEALOUSLY TO THEIR INDEPENDENCE TO ACCEPT ANY DIRECTIVES, WHATEVER THEIR SOURCE."

3. THE PCF - A DISTANCING OPERATION: ANDRIEU ALSO NOTED THAT THE PCF DOES NOT HOLD ITSELF "ACCOUNTABLE" FOR LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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ALL THE DECISIONS TAKEN BY THE PCP. THE COMBINATION OF THIS ASSERTION AND THE EDITORIAL'S INSISTENCE ON THE PCF'S NATIONAL INDEPENDENCE HAS LED SOME OBSERVERS TO QUESTION IF THE PCF MAY NOT BE PUTTING A BIT OF DISTANCE BETWEEN ITSELF AND THE PCP. WHILE THE REPUBLICA ISSUE HAS NOT YET BECOME A FRENCH NATIONAL CRISIS, PS AND PCF HAVE BEEN AT LOGGERHEADS ON THE QUESTION FOR NEARLY THREE WEEKS. ALTHOUGH THE FRENCH GENERAL PUBLIC

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HAS NOT BEEN NOTABLY RESPONSIVE TO EITHER PARTY, BOTH HAVE TAKEN STRONG POSITIONS FROM WHICH COMPROMISE HAS APPEARED IMPOSSIBLE (SEE REFTEL). THE PCF'S DISTANCING OPERATION, IF THAT IS WHAT THE EDITORIAL REPRESENTS, MAY REPRESENT A SLIGHT MOVEMENT IN THE DIRECTION OF RECOGNIZING THAT THE ISSUE MAY BE HEATING UP AS A MATTER FOR PUBLIC CONCERN AND THAT GREATER MODERATION IS REQUIRED.

4. THE QP/REPUBLICA: THE REPUBLICA'S EDITORS CHOSE

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THE SPECIAL ISSUE TO BELABOR THE PCP FOR ITS "DISTRUST" OF THE ELECTIONS' RESULTS AND TO PUBLISH THE SUBSTANCE OF A DOCUMENT ALLEGEDLY SIGNED BY SOVIET DELEGATE-GENERAL FOR WESTERN COMMUNIST PARTIES BORIS PONOMAREV. THE DOCUMENT, SUMMARIZED IN SUBSTANCE BY QP/REPUBLICA, CALLS FOR PCP FORMATION OF "OPERATIONAL GROUPS" OUTSIDE OF THE CURRENT POWER STRUCTURE, PCP CONTROL OF THE UNIONS AND TACTICAL ALLIANCE WITH THE ARMY. THE DOCUMENT STRESSES THE NEED FOR WESTERN COMMUNIST PARTIES TO WITHDRAW FROM THE "ENEMIES OF THE WORKING CLASSES" THE MASS MEDIA AND ALL OTHER MEANS OF PROPAGANDA.
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5. CONCLUSIONS AND COMMENT: THE REPUBLICA AFFAIR IS HEATING UP, BUT IT REMAINS TO BE SEEN WHETHER IT WILL EXCITE THE MASS PUBLIC IN FRANCE (SEE SEPTEL). THE FACT THAT AN IMPORTANT FRENCH DAILY HAS CHOSEN TO INTERVENE IN THE AFFAIR WILL TEND TO TAKE IT OUT OF THE REALM OF POLITICAL SQUABBLING ON THE LEFT AND PLACE IT BEFORE A WIDER AUDIENCE. BUT THAT WIDER AUDIENCE IS ALREADY CONVINCED, HAS FOR THE MOST PART ALREADY TAKEN ITS POSITIONS AND IS UNLIKELY TO CHANGE THEM AS A RESULT OF THE QP/REPUBLICA'S APPEARANCE.

6. FOR LISBON: WE WOULD APPRECIATE KNOWING WHAT PLAY THE QP/REPUBLICA GETS IN PORTUGAL.
RUSH

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